

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH    March 9, 2010**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**MINUTES**

**The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 7:00 p.m. in the Exeter-West Greenwich Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Teri Maia-Cicero, Vice-Chairperson; Gregory Coutcher, Clerk; Mary Walsh; Valerie Zuercher; Mark Rafanelli, and Robert Bollengier. Chairperson Susan DeSack was absent. Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar, Director of Administration Robert V. Ross, and Student Member Raymond Moore were present. Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar was absent.**

**ORDER – Vice-Chair Cicero called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Member Walsh read the District Mission Statement.**

**Open Forum – None**

**Recognitions/Achievements – Kate LaCroix – District Treasurer – Superintendent Geismar said that the School Committee and he would like to recognize the end of an era in Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District. Kate LaCroix is retiring from her position as District Treasurer and her last day is Friday. He said that Kate's work**

is not visible to the public; however, it is very visible within the system. Her role as District Treasurer is very important and critical. She has been indispensable and will be missed. Director of Administration Robert Ross expressed much of the same sentiments and said when you look at an organization; the key is to surround yourself with good people. He said the key to his success has been Kate. On behalf of the School Committee, Vice-Chair Cicero expressed appreciation for Kate's service to the District and presented her with a School Committee Apple Recognition Award and a Recognition Certificate.

Following a brief refreshment break, the School Committee resumed its meeting, (7:15 p.m.).

**PRESENTATION – Student Member Report – Student Member Raymond Moore told the School Committee that the last two-weeks have been quite difficult for the student body due to the loss of Coach Messier. Coach Messier was an important part of the District and will be missed dearly. Not only was he a good coach, he brought great morale to the school community. Next, Member Moore reported Student Council members have begun to sell stickers for .25¢ each with the earnings going to help Haiti earthquake victims.**

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**ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA-** Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the Consent Agenda.

**Member Rafanelli made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Member Zuercher seconded the motion. Voted 6 – 0 in favor. Motion carried.**

**The following items were approved:**

**A. Approval of Minutes - Regular Minutes of January 26, 2010**

**B. Personnel Items**

**1. Appointments**

**2. Leaves of Absence**

**3. Resignations**

**4. Grievances**

**5. Non-Renewals**

**6. Recalls**

**7. Sabbaticals**

**C. Bills – In the amount of \$309,589.23**

**D. Home School Approvals**

**End Consent Agenda**

## **Correspondence – (1) March 1, 2010 Memo to School Committee from Policy Subcommittee Regarding the Policy Manual**

**Member Rafanelli referenced Correspondence (1) and noted that the two School Committee meeting dates mentioned in the memorandum are incorrect. The March School Committee meetings are in fact scheduled for March 9 and March 23. Member Bollengier referenced Correspondence (1) and told members that the Policy Subcommittee now has had two meetings totaling more than 5-hours. He advised that a second list is forthcoming. This list is of proposed deletions. The second list will propose deletions as well and then will propose combining policies. Member Bollengier requested that the School Committee look over the list and inform the Policy Subcommittee of any questions/concerns/suggestion prior to the subcommittee beginning its work on the new formats. Vice-Chair Cicero asked members to bring any recommendations they may have to the next meeting.**

**Monthly Budget Projection 2009 – 2010 – Superintendent Geismar said the monthly budget projection is still on hold. He and Mr. Ross are waiting to see if the governor's recommended cuts are approved or not and waiting for further direction on the pension reform.**

**Monthly Status Reports - Business – Mr. Ross answered Member Bollengier's clarifying questions regarding the water storage tanks at**

**Wawaloam School and the high**

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school reline and inspection as mentioned in his Monthly Status Report. Mr. Ross referenced the section of his report regarding the School Committee previously having approved up to \$61,000 for paving of the access road to the lower level parking behind admin, the lot behind admin, and the lower lot for the athletic field. He reminded members that project needs to be completed as part of the Capital Project Fund, which is separate from the Capital Bond Fund.

Superintendent –Member Rafanelli referenced the Superintendent’s Monthly Status Report regarding the death of Coach Messier and said that he and his wife rode the bus with students to Coach Messier’s funeral. He expressed how very proud he is of the students’ response. He said that everyone needs to know how well the students performed in such a bad situation. Next, Mr. Ross answered Member Rafanelli’s clarifying questions regarding hand railing installation in the athletic field bleachers and behind the Junior High School.

**Special Education - None**

**Maintenance - None**

## **Technology – None**

**NEW BUSINESS – EWG Sports 4 Kids – Update – Sports 4 Kids representative Rob Corriea outlined the next phase and plans of the EWG track and field project. He said a number of components are going to be addressed. The storage building will be erected; plans are in place to fix the grading of the field through a maintenance program, which will slowly realize better drainage on the field; and Michael Sullivan, (MMS Remodeling) will finish the rubberized surfaces on the runways. Mr. Sullivan disseminated handouts and gave a detailed overview outlining the dimensions, layouts, etc., of the proposed sites for the next phase of the field project, the Discus/Hammer Throw and Shot Put areas. He advised that a decision by the School Committee will be needed within the next couple of months so that surveyor services may be acquired. Mr. Corriea said EWG Sports 4 Kids first priority is to finish the runways. The Shot Put areas are to be done in early fall. This work should not conflict with the use of the track, fall sports, or the use of the soccer practice fields. Member Bollengier voiced his opinion that EWG Sport 4 Kids has done a fantastic job. He expressed concerns however, with the condition of the soccer/football field this past season and asked if EWG Sports 4 Kids is able to commit to fix the field as its first priority prior to implementing the second phase. Mr. Corriea and Mrs. Pelser agreed that if drainage problems persist, priority is to get the field fixed this year. Member Rafanelli pointed out, just as a note, that the proposed location for the second phase work will abandon**

the possibility forever of using that area as a future baseball field. In response to Member Bollengier's inquiry, Mr. Sullivan said he would research if the School Committee needs permits prior to cutting down trees for the second phase work.

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**In\$ite Certification – Member Bollengier said based on discussion today with some administrative staff members and because certain figures are being looked at, he moves to move this discussion to the next School Committee meeting and to table it tonight. Member Zuercher seconded the motion. Voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion carried.**

**2009 Audit Report – In response to Member Bollengier's request, consensus of the School Committee was to continue this item to the next regular meeting agenda to allow members time to review the report and submit any questions they may have prior to voting to accept the audit. CPA Pat Boucher gave a brief overview of the EWGRSD Annual Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2009. Ms. Boucher and District Treasurer Kate LaCroix answered members' clarifying questions regarding the accounting practices used for tracking the high school student activities funds. This item will continue to the next regular meeting agenda for approval.**

**Final Budget 2010 – 2011 – Adoption – Superintendent Geismar presented his recommended 2010 – 2011 Budget of \$30,199,275 -- a 3.5% increase over last year's budget, with a town share for Exeter of 3.12% -- \$322,841 and a town share for West Greenwich of 3.83% -- \$463,874 -- an overall increase of \$786,716. At the request of Member Bollengier, Dr. Geismar gave a breakdown of the latest cuts totaling \$762,000 to arrive at these budget figures. Dr. Geismar reported that cuts were based on enrollment and anticipated concession bargaining. The additional positions of Curriculum Director, special education staff for Exeter House students, and one Council-94 teacher assistant were cut. There is one retiree opening at the elementary level that will probably not need to be filled. It is anticipated that enrollment will decrease in the high school as students sign up for classes. Other cuts included were junior high athletics, Professional Development totaling \$50,000, and a wage freeze for Administrators once more. Member Bollengier pointed out that some of these cuts are not definite and are based on assumptions. Superintendent Geismar said this is his best estimation at this time. If the voters do not approve this budget, it may be necessary to eliminate some programs that are not within the BEPs. The District will dig as deep as it can and will need employees to pitch in to help the District survive.**

**Member Bollengier made a motion for adoption of the budget as proposed by the Director of Administration and recommended by the Superintendent with a share for Exeter of 3.12% and West Greenwich**



share of 3.83%.

Member Bollengier said he would rephrase his motion.

Member Bollengier made a motion to approve the budget for 2010 – 2011 proposed at \$30,199,275. Member Walsh seconded the motion. Voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion carried.

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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Transportation Update – Director of Administration Robert Ross referenced transportation enclosure 0005a. and reported that he is projecting a positive balance of approximately \$35,341 for the current year's statewide out-of-district transportation costs. He reported that the District had some ridership issues when it went from a one-third to a one-half ownership of a bus.**

**Mr. Ross said he that he will be happy if the costs hold; however, he is still optimistically cautious with the numbers. Next, Mr. Ross referenced enclosure 0005 b. regarding the Assumption and Agreement for Salter Transportation and Ocean State Transit. He advised that the information has been forwarded to legal counsel for review. Salter is seeking to assign EWGRSD In-District-Transportation contract to Ocean State Transit. Mr. Ross said he is confident in recommending going forward with the**

agreement because the same management, staffing, and functionality of operations will remain in place. He asked the School Committee to vote or come to a consensus and then this item can come back for a signature at the next regular School Committee meeting.

Member Bollengier made a motion to table this item to the next School Committee meeting to give the District time to get legal counsel opinion. Member Walsh seconded the motion. Voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion carried.

Mr. Ross answered Member Bollengier's clarifying questions regarding conflicting reports he said he received from District Treasurer Kate LaCroix and the Director of Administration regarding transportation costs. Mr. Ross explained that is because Ms. LaCroix based her projections on her end encumbering while he looks at projected out numbers based on trend.

Mr. Ross referenced packet enclosure 0005c. and reported that Paul Larson of RIDE Statewide Transportation is inquiring whether EWG would change the District bus monitor variances to eliminate the need for a monitor. State regulations require monitors on buses with K-5 students; however, there are three variances allowed which can eliminate the need for a monitor. (1) Zone monitors, plus public address system; (2) Door-to-door transportation K-5; (3) Door-to-door transportation K only. Mr. Larson says if the School Committee chooses to do something with bus monitors [on out-of-district

buses]; it could save the District approximately \$14,500 annually. Mr. Ross recommended not rushing monitor variance at this point because it is uncertain where the District will end up financially. Dr. Geismar recommended first getting the full concept of not having monitors, and then deciding if it is worth pursuing. Member Rafanelli voiced his opinion that from a safety perspective, \$14,000 is not a lot of money. Dr. Geismar said he and Mr. Ross can do more research on this matter and bring their findings back to Committee. Member Walsh asked how the School Committee would work to encourage legislatures to change the law requiring school districts to pay for private/parochial school transportation. Dr. Geismar advised to start with a consensus from the Committee and then to present the proposal to State Representatives. Member Walsh voiced her opinion that would be worthwhile to pursue and publicize. Member Bollengier said that he would support that and suggested that perhaps representatives

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should be invited to discuss this matter and offer the School Committee some insight of how to make such a change in the General Assembly. Vice-Chair Cicero agreed this is a good idea. Mr. Ross reported the District has paid approximately \$519,000 for non-public expenses. He reminded members that the District also pays for private school textbooks and for non-certified personnel to manage that task during the summer months. Dr. Geismar said he

**and Mr. Ross will research this matter further.**

**Capital Project Update – Superintendent Geismar reported that progress continue on punch list items. One big issue now is a permanent water solution at Metcalf School. There are three options under consideration: (1) Locate tanks at the well site, (2) Locate tanks in the building, (3) Locate tanks in the courtyard where they are currently.**

**Reports/Comments –**

**Important Dates and Meetings – Thursday, March 18, 2010-Deadline for motions to change the Budget by more than \$10,000; Monday, March 22, 2010-Public Hearing (7:00 p.m.); Tuesday, March 23, 2010-School Committee Meeting (Metcalf School Presentation-@Metcalf)**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION – RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 – None**

**Adjournment - Member Bollengier moved to adjourn. Member Walsh seconded the motion. Voted 6 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.**

**ROBIN CERIO**

**CLERK**